

## HISTORY OF THE ACTON TOWN ATLAS

Maps and plans of Acton have existed since the time of its Incorporation in 1735. They have been used to show everything from streets and rivers to the locations and names of the historic homesteads. Surveys and plans of individual parcels and subdivisions have also been filed and recorded over the years. However, there was no comprehensive map of Acton depicting the relationship of the various individual parcels of land and streets in town with respect to each other. Following several years of painstaking research and compilation of data from deeds and plans, the Engineering Department produced the Town Atlas for use by the Assessors Office in 1965. Since that time, the Atlas has become the foundation for property-based information throughout the Town. Primarily used by the Assessors Office as a tool to maintain a current database of parcels for property tax assessment, the Atlas has evolved over the years to become an information source for every department in the Town:

- 1966 - Contours and building locations added for the Sewerage Study Committee;
- 1966 - Uniform street numbering system developed by the Engineering Department;
- 1968 - Local Flood Zone Protection Districts added by the Engineering Department
- 1978 - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zones added by the Engineering Department;
- 1980 - Wetlands delineation added by IEP, Inc.;
- 1986 - Water mains, gas mains and storm water drainage facilities plotted from available sources by the Engineering Department;
- 1988 - Revised FEMA flood zones added by the Engineering Department;
- 1991 - Automation of the Atlas using a Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) software program started by the Engineering Department;
- 1996 - Preliminary CAD version of the Atlas printed.

As the task of updating all of the information contained on the Atlas on an annual basis became more time-consuming, and cost of personal computers became more affordable, the Town began to formulate a plan for converting the Atlas to a computer generated format. In 1991 the process of standardizing the sheet sizes and digitizing the streets and property lines was begun. Edge matching errors which were abundant on the hand drafted version were corrected and an arbitrary coordinate grid system was established to help identify the relative position individual sheets. The initial version of the computerized Atlas was printed in 1996 and contains the basic parcel and street numbering systems. The process of converting additional data such as building locations, utilities, contours, flood plains and wetlands will continue over the next few years.

As the Town moves closer to the implementation of a Geographic Information System, (GIS) the Atlas will serve as the framework to link the data maintained by various departments via a common, parcel based reference. The Engineering Department plans to continue the task of maintaining the Atlas with the most up to date information available. For the past thirty years, the Town Atlas has proven to be a valuable tool not only for the Town Staff, but also for land developers, engineers, surveyors, realtors and the residents of Acton.

## GENERAL TOWN STATISTICS:

TOWN-OWNED ROADS	104.7	MI.
STATE-OWNED ROADS	10.3	MI.
TOWN-OWNED SIDEWALKS	36.3	MI.
AREA OF TOWN (ACRES)	12990.2	AC.
AREA OF TOWN (SQ. MI.)	20.3	S.M.

## MUNICIPAL LAND LIST

GENERAL MUNICIPAL (GM)	374.35	AC.
CONSERVATION & TOWN FOREST (CON)	1564.66	AC.
ACTON WATER DISTRICT	403.40	AC.
CEMETERY (CEM)	181.53	AC.
ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (REG)	74.68	AC.
TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT (SCH)	114.45	AC.
CONCORD & MAYNARD (C&M)	70.95	AC.
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS (COM)	209.33	AC.
ACTON HOUSING AUTHORITY (AHA)	12.46	AC.